

SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE AS AN ANTI-WAR NOVEL

SAI HARSHITHA. K

Symbiosis Law school, Symbiosis International (Deemed University), Hyderabad, India

ABSTRACT

Slaughterhouse-Five or the children's crusade: a duty dance with death is a novel written by renowned author Kurt Vonnegut. This classic is a universal favorite among the people. It contains elements of blunt realism, science fiction and dark humor. Kurt Vonnegut found the systematic, unsatisfactory arcs of many stories in contrast to reality, and he began to explore the ambiguity between good and bad luck in his novels. He sought to understand human behaviour by studying the shapes of stories - direct chronology and clear destiny. The novel revolves around the Dresden Bombing in World War II. This study attempts to understand the nuances of "Slaughterhouse-Five" and the relevance of his writings in the contemporary world. Slaughterhouse-Five is often referred to as an anti-war novel but we don't really know what it means for a novel to be against war or for novels to pass judgement. This study is an attempt to provide the reader with an answer to the questions raised in the previous sentence. This research paper also depicts how time is structured in the novel. The protagonist, Billy Pilgrim experiences illusions of time travel and alien abduction. This happened to Billy whenever he remembered the instances of Dresden Bombing in World War II. This shows that memory and time are intricately connected. This research paper also aims to understand the post modernistic and tralfimadorian concepts along with anti-war components of the novel. Postmodern novels in the contemporary world don't provide us with the ideologies of world wars because a certain definition for the same wasn't discussed upon. Slaughterhouse-Five was published during the Vietnam war, paving way for the public to contemplate on the debatable aspects of war that were unexplored by authors earlier.

KEYWORDS: *Slaughterhouse-Five, Kurt Vonnegut, Anti-War Literature, Postmodernism & Tralfimadorian Literature*

Original Article

Received: May 09, 2021; **Accepted:** May 29, 2021; **Published:** Jun 14, 2021; **Paper Id:** IJELDEC20211

1. INTRODUCTION

The history of humanity has numerous references to wars. Armed conflicts between countries have been prevalent since time immemorial. Wars, over time, have seen an evolution starting from seeking power to protecting territories. They can be perceived in many different ways; some see war as a glorious victory and some loathe it for its consequences. Individuals in their good conscience would avoid war, but a pre-established notion of how wars were acclaimed in archives and antiquity put a biased opinion altogether. Wars are sometimes inevitable because people feel the need to protect their territories. There were very few instances during World War II where people spoke about the consequences of war. The victory was celebrated but the consequences, often ignored. The allies in World War II bombed Dresden, a major network for railway and road in Nazi Germany. Eight hundred bomber raids dropped around two thousand tons of explosives, destroying the city. Kurt Vonnegut, who served in World War II for the allies had to catch sight of the ruins and rubble of Dresden. Kurt Vonnegut like the protagonist, Billy pilgrim witnessed the Dresden Bombings from 13th to 15th February in 1945. The title of Slaughterhouse-Five and quite a bit of its source material originated from Vonnegut's own encounters in world war II. As a captive, he lived in a previous slaughterhouse in Dresden, where he took shelter in an underground meat storage while associated

powers besieged the city. Billy Pilgrim like the author witnessed the Dresden bombings and was held as a prisoner of war. Warfare shapes the character of Billy Pilgrim and often impacts his choices. In *Slaughterhouse-Five* the author attempts to show this by using tralfamadorian element. The protagonist can't sleep because he knows that the aliens will arrive to abduct him. He knows the aliens are coming because he has become "unstuck in time", causing him to experience events out of chronological order. Every time Billy gets abducted by aliens the events that follow in the fictitious world are the reminiscences of the trauma of war. The conflict between the desire to accept the violence and the need to suppress its traumatic memory. Kurt Vonnegut wrote his novel *Slaughterhouse-Five* in order to understand the behavioural changes a man undergoes because of war. Human psyche gets tremendously affected due to post-traumatic stress. Kurt often exclaimed that stories had shapes, the ones that the psyche has to decipher. During the course of the story, it becomes difficult to figure out if Billy Pilgrim is at good fortune or not. The perception of the reader matters the most in this case. Billy from being a survivor of the bombing in the war to an optometrist, the impact of war doesn't wear off. The trauma and stress experienced by him is depicted through the tralfamadorian component. In the supernatural alien realm, Billy would be faced with similar challenges as he had in the war. This was the time Billy altered his encounters in a manner that he wanted them to finish. Vonnegut felt that such a story is more consistent with real life, in which we all fall victim to a series of accidents, unable to predict how events will affect us in the long run. *Slaughterhouse-Five* is an amplification of the increasing inhuman cruelty in post war the western world. However, the conflict between universal ideals, unintended consequences and personal loyalties remain relevant than ever.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Slaughterhouse-Five has been extensively explored in the literary world, given the intricacies it contains. A Literature quarterly titled "Unstruck in time: *Slaughterhouse-Five*" (N, 1973), Specifies about the Occasions are not introduced as an immediate, direct story yet are rather muddled, related halfway, and filled in later. This is signified by Billy's life of hospitalizations and brutality present a sort of everlasting repeat: similar occasions happen over and over. Consequently, Tralfamadorian time turns into the novel's time. A Hungarian Journal article by the name of "Postmodern Infundibula and Other Non-linear Time Structures in "Breakfast of Champions, *Slaughterhouse-Five*" (Sieber, 2011), This literary work investigates Vonnegut's utilization of time as a way to impart and mix the incredible and the ordinary to create an understanding of being an individual, as he examines prejudice, voracity, sexism, and brutality as compared against the estimations of human consideration. In an article named "All this happened, more or less": Making Sense of the War Experience Through Humour in "Slaughterhouse-Five" (Gallagher, 2012), The novel isn't skeptical in its depictions of war and brutality. Undoubtedly, it presents two different ways of considering passing that over the long haul interlace. The primary, addressed by the articulation "So it goes," shows that change is the essence of life—something that would not happen by eternal help. The review written in an esteemed newspaper "The Guardian" (Schultz, 2019) says that this shouldn't imply that all that scrutinizing and believing is difficult work. Vonnegut makes it simple for us by making it entertaining. The Tralfamadorians may have a couple of confounded thoughts regarding four-dimensional time, such as one in which Billy winds up watching a war film in reverse, sees warplanes contracting fires in besieged urban communities, accumulate them into "round and hollow holders" and afterwards return those bombs to processing plants where they were dismantled and the minerals that made them were isolated out and removed to be covered in the ground. The book by the name of "The Vonnegut Effect" (Klinkowitz, 2004) speaks about wealth and face as showcased in the novel for instance Billy's child Robert is a "triumph," an officer in the Green Berets in Vietnam, however he has become, fundamentally, a very much prepared executioner. Neither Vonnegut nor Pilgrim valorizes this sort of achievement. These examinations of cash and

achievement lead to the bigger issues of the war and entwine with different topics. The putforth was whether the bombings were triumphant. From a perspective, it was, since obviously, the unarmed residents could mount no guard. Yet, from a bigger perspective, the Allies have succeeded uniquely in demonstrating the purposelessness and bloodshed of the war. The article "The Arbitrary Cycle of Slaughterhouse-Five" (McGinnis, 1975), gives us insights into how Vonnegut discovered a strategy to portray an experience that lies past normalizing human discernment by going to the nonexclusive ascribes of science fiction. By giving explicit thought to the conspicuous/new twofold trademark for science fiction, Vonnegut finds the expression and structure to depict the exceptional, frightening occurrences of injury when all is said in done and horrendous memory specifically. The book "A nation of two: Constructing worlds through the work of Kurt Vonnegut" (Farrell & Woodbridge., 2017), explores the condition of scholarly queries that tosses its shadows on our psychological contraption challenges the pragmatist goals; and the condition of ontological vulnerability – both intratextual and extratextual questions the cases of innovation, sound significance and dependable portrayal of the world are concerned. through the selection of his hero – Billy Pilgrim – and the control of different postmodernist methods, Vonnegut uncovered the outrages of battles by revealing the brave façade by which countries veil their genuine expectations in dispatching wars, and shows the ethical vacuum that portrays after war western social orders.

3. ANTIWAR ASPECT OF SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE

Antiwar writing undercuts these figments about the battle through reasonable, every now and again first-individual depiction of the abhorrences of battle and its ruinous consequence. Albeit a few journalists have a detectable political viewpoint, most antiwar messages share a more extensive worry for uncovering the repulsiveness and mercilessness of all war. The incendiary attack on Dresden in Germany was a strong occasion for Vonnegut. While discussing the events in Dresden, he tells the occasion in such a way that the user can participate in his own view of the event. He experienced the Dresden experience with sympathy and anger instead of hostility, torment and hatred. Billy, the protagonist, notices the wickedness and brutality of the world when the city of Dresden is bombed. He feels the abnormal hopelessness about the attack due to his circumstances by which he is trapped. His partners and he encounter and see the endurance of his opponents. In these lines, Vonnegut draws the user's consideration to the basic theme of a man's ability to be brutal and ruthless. Billy also illustrated the consequence of the attack by saying, "If a delightful city resembling the outside of the moon" (Vonnegut, 1969). Accordingly, Vonnegut tries, in the voice of Billy, to convince readers that such slaughter is even possible. Those of our enemies should not be viewed with fulfilment or happiness, since we as a whole are people who need to be valued. The scientific process of incongruence is additionally used to further perpetuate the counterwar theme by downplaying horrific scenes and misery from the war. The use of dark humour makes Vonnegut's crowd chuckle at examples of death and decimation, which at this point has a critical effect on leaves the reader behind. Vonnegut does this in order to viable pass on the assumption of his war enemy by controlling his crowd to feel regretful and embarrassed. Another focus that allows users to think deeply about the negative side of the war, which means that the war is absurd and redundant, just like what the winged creature Billy said. Another example of the incongruence used in the novel is the extraordinarily far-fetched example in which the infantrymen are bombed but in the case of Billy and Ronald, it's the opposite they endure the bombings. This method makes a sense of remorse for the readers, as the war is wrong and easy to mock especially when the one mocking isn't participating in it. This kind of conviction of souls about war relates to the counterwar opinion that is evident throughout the novel.

4. POSTMODERNISM IN SLAUGHTERHOUSE FIVE

The connection between impulsive fiction and the substance of the basic message incorporates the authorial viewpoint. The metonymic undertones of the authorial voice discover their way into the creator's vision as projected into the discourse of the characters in the content. Neither the characters nor the setting can exclusively pass on the authorial vision. Surely, they are essential appearances of the creator's printed message. However, the content requires a commonsense mode to adumbrate the creator's message. In *Slaughterhouse-Five*, talk control shows up in the characters' transaction with the creator's vision. The allegorical hero Billy Pilgrim represents real occasions outside the content. The hero's mission all through the novel embodies the creator's perpetual portrayal of the negative results of the Second World War, and how it influenced the characters' practices. The accompanying portion delineates the hero's change over the span of the novel. He stops to be kind as normal and utilizations undermining specialists as weapons: "It was totally Billy's shortcoming that this battling association not, at this point existed, Weary felt, and Billy planned to pay" (Vonnegut, 1969). All things considered, Billy's exhaustion and apprehension are brought about by the grouping of occasions during the besieging of Dresden. All the occasions forced on him embody a specific gander at the world which requires an alternate response. Clearly, postmodern authors talk about science of awareness that does not move in an orderly fashion. Consciousness just as experience is transition and liquid. Individuals make due as distanced people. There is an extraordinary association between science, psych and time. The psyche goes to and fro. Actual presence can not be perceived regarding clock time. In current day books, time has a decent connection with character or independence. In this way, time is relative in postmodern books.

5. TRALFMADORIAN PORTRAYAL

The limits of science fiction have reliably been insufficiently described, and they are getting more applicable. The old separation between science fiction and dream is that science fiction went from the known to be likely, and dream figured out how to exhibit the inconceivable which is as of now completely neglected. The new forming is strongly likewise fantastical. The breakdown is moreover found in the makers themselves, who as of now go too far without danger of discipline. Various standard science fiction has been assaulted by significantly competent makers, arranged to work on an incredibly raised level. Present day science remains as an immense and generally immaculate supply of analogy, however as of late various writers like Kurt have started to draw upon it differently. For instance, the protagonist Pilgrim asks the why the aliens, also known as tralfmadorians, transported him into another world to which the aliens reply that the time frame of this world and the world he lives in are the same, which is why he has nothing to worry about. all occasions in time have occurred and are going on at the same time. They represent the vagueness of the living. The universe exists as an irregular and a vulnerable spot. Simultaneously, regardless of feeling feeble, lack of concern doesn't matter to those aliens. Furthermore, the bigger subject of Vietnam is depicted, by Vonnegut, as an activity in a political dream: an unjustifiable war supported by people with significant influence. In this sense, sci-fi empowers significant facts about death, life, and time to be uncovered, while the reality introduced to Billy Pilgrim frequently includes dream, hallucination, and fiction.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Slaughterhouse-Five is a restatement of present day and pre-current abstract modes. It is a resurrection of postmodern fiction which directs a scrutinize of current writing. In the broadest terms, the novel is apparently an anecdotal work uncovering the lamentable results of the Second World War. In specific, it is a portrayal of the truth outside its literary

structure. Contemporary story modes do not have a certain relevance as current writing emulates the styles and strategies of past writing. From now on, there is another preference in postmodernism to split away from innovation and its dependence on prior artistic modes. The fundamental procedure supported by postmodern scholars is abstract experimentation. Vonnegut, consistent with the soul of postmodernism, utilizes fixed clear exploratory strategies which render him an essayist of the zeitgeist. In *Slaughterhouse-Five*, he uses abstract experimentation on the intrinsic procedures of the novel. This experimentation is done by changing how the novel arrangements with the story perspective, setting and characters. These fundamental components are dully imitated in current writing. Nonetheless, they are controlled in Vonnegut's postmodern anecdotal content. Such control multiplies inside a postmodern relative vision of the real world. The overall vision of reality in a postmodern setting relies upon the creator's viewpoint of the current clear-cut changes of the time. Vonnegut misuses metafictional gadgets to present his basic assessment through the storyteller throughout the plot as an anecdotal interaction between the creator's theoretical vision and reality. In this manner, he gives a premise to see the person's trauma after the Second World War. Wars are the most destructive facilities humans have been following them through ages. It is crucial to take note that stress and trauma will completely alter a person's life. The way they perceive life will be difficult because they keep getting the reminisces of the war in their daily life experiences. It builds up a significant subject of war trauma to precisely portray it through the eyes of Billy Pilgrim. The sci-fi component of time travel tactfully interlaces the psychological result of the battle for troopers. Repercussions incorporate PTSD, as observed with Pilgrim. Notwithstanding the despairing goes through of the content, his dull subjects of mental injury are crucial and viable in advancing the novel with a solid enemy of war topic. The message is clear and exact in its story of war and the injury it conveys for those required by showing Billy Pilgrim's battles and encounters as a surviving soldier.

REFERENCES

1. Brison, Susan. "Trauma Narratives and the Remaking of the Self." *Acts of Memory*. Ed. Mieke Bal. Hanover, NH: UP of New England, 1999. 39–54.
2. Saheleh Kheirabadi, "Identity Crisis in Jhumpa Lahiri's; *The Namesake Novel*", *International Journal of Linguistics and Literature (IJLL)*, Vol. 5, Issue 3, pp, 1-4
3. Farrell, S. (-I., & Woodbridge. (2017). *Nation of Two*": *Constructing Worlds through Narrative in the Work of Kurt Vonnegut*. In S. Farrel, In *Imagining Home: American War Fiction from Hemingway to 9/11* (pp. pp. 61-103). Rochester, NY; Woodbridge.: Boydell and Brewer.
4. Mariam Jamila, "Robert Frost's Poetry: Advocating the Sense of Duty", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (IJHSS)*, Vol. 3, Issue 2, pp, 69-76
5. Gallagher, R. (2012). *All this happened more or less "making sense through humour in Slaughterhouse-Five*. Penn University press, special edition 26.
6. Hue Hoang Thi & Ha Hoang Thi Hong, "Acculturation in Vietnamese Contemporary Literature", *International Journal of Communication and Media Studies (IJCMS)*, Vol. 6, Issue 3, pp, 13-18
7. Klinkowitz, J. (2004). *The Vonnegut Effect*. University of South Carolina Press.
8. Goutam Karmakar, "A Postmodern Reading of A. K. Ramanujan", *International Journal of English and Literature (IJEL)*, Vol. 5, Issue 1, pp, 71-80
9. McGinnis, W. D. (1975). *The Arbitrary Cycle of Slaughterhouse-Five*. *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 17:1, 55-67.
10. N, I. (1973). *Unstuck in Time: "Clockwork Orange and Slaughterhouse-Five"*. *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 122-131.

11. Penn State University Press. *All this happened, m. o.-F.* (2012). *All this happened, more or less": Making Sense of the War Experience Through Humour in "Slaughterhouse-Five.* Penn State University Press. *Studies in American Humour, special edition* 26.
12. Schultz, B. (2019). *Slaughterhouse-Five blurs time – and increases the power of reality.* Los Angeles: *The Guardian.*
13. Sieber. (2011). *Postmodern Infundibula and Other Non-linear Time Structures in "Breakfast of Champions, Slaughterhouse-Five.* *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies (HJEAS)*, 17(1), 127-141.
14. Suvin, Darko. *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction.* New Haven: Yale UP, 1979.
15. Vonnegut, K. (1969). *Slaughterhouse-Five.* Delacorte.
16. Vonnegut, Kurt. *Armageddon in Retrospect.* New York: Putnam, 2008.